



Mandaean Writings

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MANDAEAN WRITINGS

By E. S. DROWER

IT is rarely that an outsider is privileged to see, far less handle, Mandaean books and rolls in Iraq, and the fact that I have been allowed, by degrees, so to do is a proof of the kindness and toleration which my Mandaean friends in Iraq have shown to me. At my request the box is usually opened, the precious manuscripts handed down from father to son are lifted out, the white cloth which wraps them is taken off, and they are opened for me to see. I have even had a Book of Souls written in my name, a compliment which, I am told, has never before been paid to one not a Mandaean.

When a priest brings in a holy book, all those present rise, and the priest kisses the book and puts it against his forehead before opening it. A sweet perfume clings to the manuscripts, for sandalwood or myrtle is often placed in the box in which they are kept. This latter is sometimes of iron. Stories are told of a holy book or books which have come through a conflagration uninjured, or merely scorched, and their preservation is thought to be miraculous. It is possible that while the reed hut flares up quickly and sinks into ashes, the box offers more resistance, and the manuscripts are rescued almost undamaged.

The holy writings are cherished, and the possession of them ensures the blessings of good health and happiness in this life and a quick journey through the houses of purification in the next. The priests and laymen of the priestly caste usually inherit manuscripts from their fathers, and part of a priest's revenue is derived from the copying of holy books and magical rolls. The priesthood has fallen so low that few are able to do this correctly, and few understand all that they write. However, it is a process which blesses both the scribe and the recipient.

The ink is made by the priests themselves, and is black and shiny. Nearly every priest has his own recipe for making ink, which is kept in the form of dry crystals and mixed with water at the time of using. Gall-nut is one of the ingredients, soot another, but priests use scented herbs and flowers in the making of the ink (*diuta*) and no animal substance may be mixed with it, since killing is abhorrent to the Great Life. Similarly, no parchment or leather binding may be used for the books. I have asked whether any such substance as papyrus was used, and the reply given was that 'in the olden times we used stone tablets and leaden sheets'. As a matter of fact leaden sheets are still used, for part of the ritual at the yearly reconsecration of the *mandi* (cult-hut) demands that some prayers shall be dipped three times beneath the water. I have seen the leaden sheets of a ritual receiving such ablution.

Writing in itself is a magic act, and the alphabet is sacred. Each letter is supposed to invoke a spirit of light and is a thing of power. It is a practice to write the letters separately and to sleep each night with one letter beneath

the pillow. If the sleeper sees in a dream something which enlightens him, or solves some question for him, the letter upon which he slept that night is taken to a silversmith, and a replica in gold or silver is made and worn round the neck as an amulet.

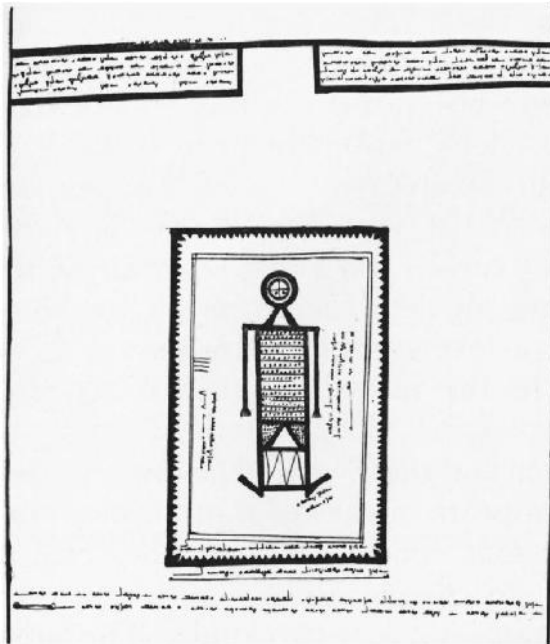
The largest of the codices is the *Ginza* (the Treasure), also known as the Book of Adam, and the Great Book. It is a collection of many books, of palpably different date, authorship, and belief. Part of it is in prose, part in verse, and the segments are divided from each other by the abbreviation *S—a*, and usually by a religious formula. Sometimes a new section begins by the repetition of phrases recalling to the powers of light that the book has been written for So-and-So, and calling down blessings upon him and his family. The book is in two parts, the second part being concerned with dissertations about death and hymns about the life after death, and in this part the writing is reversed so that the book must be held upside down.

This book, and the codex known as the *Draša d Yahya* (Teaching of Yahya), another collection of fragments one of which deals with Yahya Yuhana (John the Baptist of the New Testament), have both been translated into German by the late Mark Lidzbarski. He has also translated some of the rituals and prayers (*Mandäische Liturgien, mitgeteilt, übersetzt und erklärt*, Berlin, 1920). This embraces the *Sidra d Nišmatha* (Book of Souls), the baptism ritual, and the *Masiqta* or prayers for the dead, grouped under the name *Qulasta*, which is a Mandaean term for a collection of prayers. The same book contains a translation of a roll in the Bodleian, dated 936 of the Hijra, and some marriage prayers and rituals. Other prayers in this translation are collected from manuscripts in Paris and from De Morgan's *Textes mandaites*.

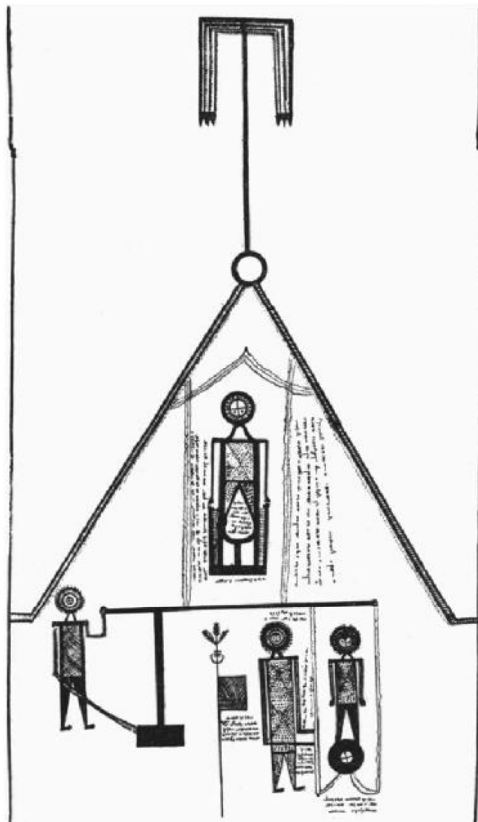
The ritual for ordaining priests (a copy is in the British Museum) remains untranslated, and to the best of my belief the rituals for the reconsecration of the cult-hut, and the '*zidqa briha*' as the eating for the dead is called, are not in European collections at all. I have some of these in my possession, and they include the well-known and much-used prayer used when myrtle wreaths are hung in the houses, the invocation of ancestors, and other interesting rituals and devotional writings.

There is, however, another branch of Mandaean literature which has been neglected, except as regards the inscriptions found on bowls.¹ With regard to the latter, it is an age-old Mandaean custom in times of plague and sickness to bury beneath the threshold or by the grave of a person carried off by disease two bowls, one inverted above the other, within which are inscribed exorcisms of disease-spirits, spirits of darkness, curses on those who ill-wish and bring misfortune, and invocations of the spirits of light. Rolls completely in the spirit of the bowls and copied and re-copied for hundreds of years (often without comprehension, since some names and spirits mentioned have passed away from the orthodox religion, and are not found in the holy books) are extremely numerous, for they are looked upon as protections against disease

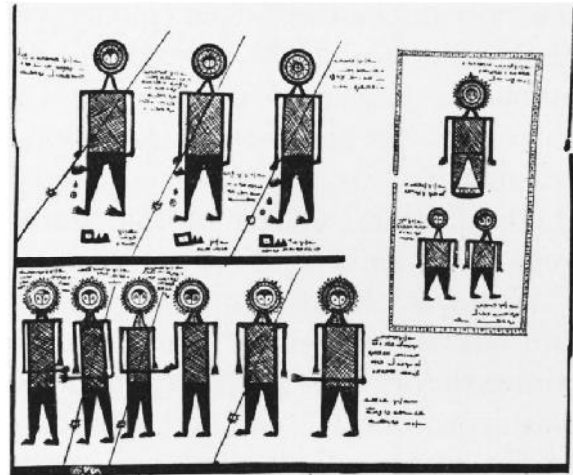
¹ H. POGNON, *Inscriptions mandaites des coupes de Khouabir*.



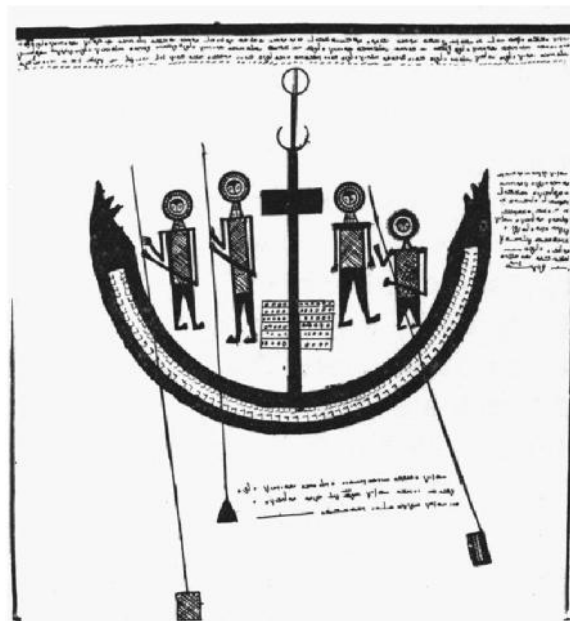
1. 'This is a likeness of Pthahil, son of Hibil Ziwa who begot him from Zahra'il.'



2. The Scales of Abathur. In the right scale is *Sital*, the 'purest human soul'.



3. (a) Left top: *Hibil* and *Bihram* with ritual staves, wreaths, and braziers; also sacramental wafer (*peytha*) and water in *kanina*.
(b) Right top: *Simat Hiiia* with two lesser female *melkas*.
(c) Bottom: *Adam*, *Sital*, and other perfected souls in priestly dress. Two are giving the *kushta* (ritual hand-grasp).



4. The boat which transports perfected souls.

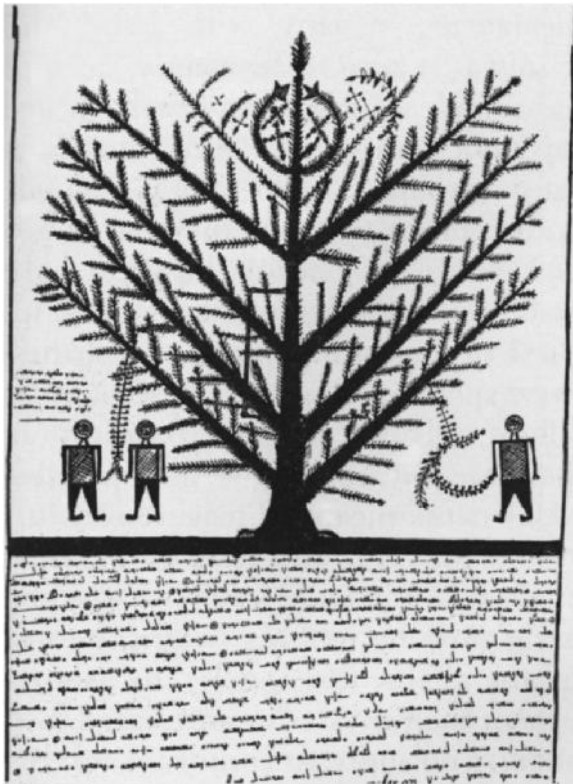
and the evil eye, and do not cost so much as the holy books. They are singularly pagan in tone, and one occasionally gets the very beings against whom polemics are delivered in the *Ginza* reappearing in these rolls as beneficent beings, though usually with the angel or deity termination -'il or iil-. In the holy books the Seven (planets) and the Twelve (signs of the Zodiac) sons of 'Ur and Ruha are treated as enemies. In the magic rolls they are often invoked and blessed, particularly Taura (Tauriil), and Libat (Zahriil), 'Uriil, and so on. Occasionally direct invocation is made, without the whitewashing termination. I have even a magic roll, a love charm, addressed to Libat (Dlibat, Ištār), which begins, frankly, 'In the name of Libat, mistress of gods and men'.

However, the usual damning of the Seven and the Twelve (the seven planets and the twelve signs of the Zodiac) also appears in the rolls, often in a most contradictory way; in fact orthodox religious convention and older charms and exorcisms are blended into a most suggestive whole.

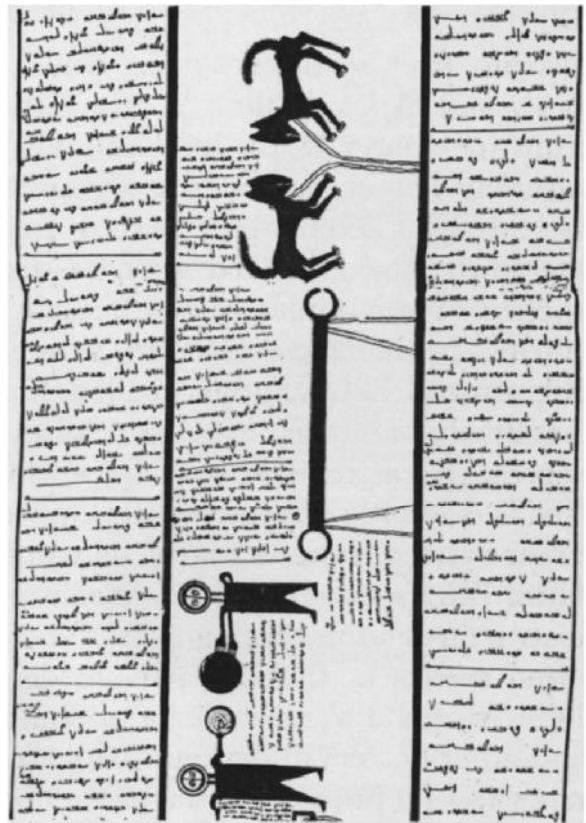
The magic roll is called a *qmaha*, or *zrazta*, and is of two kinds. The larger sort is not easily carried on the person; the smaller, for which the word *zrazta* is usual, though not invariable, is usually written minutely on a long strip of paper from 2½ to 3 inches wide, tightly rolled and inserted into a small gold or silver case so that it may be worn beneath the clothing. The latter kind is often of great length, 7 or 8 yards being not uncommon, and a thinner paper is used. These magic rolls are instructive as to some inherent beliefs, and show, moreover, what a timorous disposition makes the Mandaeans have recourse to such protection against malice, disease, and oppressors. Curses long and bitter are called forth upon the heads of enemies, slanderers, and those of other beliefs, and sometimes a *tarih* or historical tag occurs at the end of one of these documents, describing some such disaster as overtook the community in the Moslem year 885, when the Mandaeans were almost wiped out by a massacre.

I will endeavour to give an idea of some of the leading features of these rolls. The name of the person for whose protection the roll has been written recurs throughout, together with invocations of the powers of light and life for himself, his family, his possessions, and his trade. The first few lines and the last lines are almost invariably the letters of the alphabet, which, as remarked above, have protective power. Then (usually) follow short formulae, such as 'My lord be praised!' 'Pure of heart, pure of mouth.' All have the well-worn 'In the Name of the Great Life! Healing and purity, strength and stability, speech and hearing, joy of heart and a forgiver of sins may there be for So-and-So, son (or daughter) of So-and-So'. As in most magical documents the mother, and not the father, is mentioned as the progenitor. The conventional 'and Life is victorious!' is the common ending to a section.

If the invocation of unorthodox powers is amazing, the absence of some orthodox powers is also marked. Those who over-estimate the role played by John the Baptist in the Mandaean religion will be astonished to find that he is unmentioned, except amongst the names of ancestors and holy men, and



5. The tree which nourishes with milky fruit sucklings who have died in infancy.



7. From top to bottom: wolves in the watch-house of 'Nbo (Mercury); an instrument of torture, and demons of song and dance.



6. Below: dogs in the watch-house of Nirigh (Mars); above: lions in the watch-house of Kiwan (Jupiter).



8. From top to bottom: demons and a well of black water, the guardian of the gate, and the Great Lion at the portal.

has no special importance. Anoš appears in company with Hibil and Šitil, and Anoš 'Uthra is rare. Yawar Ziwa (Yawar is certainly derived from the root YWR 'to be dazzlingly bright' and not from the Persian word meaning helper, as has been suggested by some translators), and Simat Hiia are the two heavenly powers most frequently invoked. Simat Hiia is a female life spirit, and is looked upon as the mother of all that has breath. She is spoken of sometimes as the 'female countenance' of one of the great light spirits. In the *Diwan Abathur*, which I shall describe later, she is placed with Bihram and Hibil, and is labelled, 'daughter of Yušamin, spouse of Pthahil'. As Pthahil belongs to a somewhat lower spirit circle, and is sometimes represented as rebellious to the world of light, this is a curious juxtaposition. She is evidently a fertility deity, for in the same Diwan her throne is labelled 'This is her throne: Leafy is its name'. Her name means 'Treasure of Life'. Hibil Ziwa appears in the role of warrior and deliverer and Manda d Hiia as instructor: and in the magic rolls one of these two, or a nameless spirit of light, often speaks in the first person, describing how he left his companions of light, stormed the dwellings of the gods, the allahs, the angels, the astartes and other powers of darkness, stole from them their mysteries and learnt their names. (To pronounce the name of a spirit is not only to conjure it up, but to compel it to do the bidding of the person who has summoned it.) The spirit of light treats the spirits and gods of darkness roughly, and polemic often enters into the conjuration, as in:

With my sandals I trod them down,
I took away the secrets in their heads,
I buffeted their heads.

The evil spirits dwelling in high places and conventicles I smoked out . . . &c.

The passage ends, as is natural, 'and the haters and enemies of So-and-So, daughter of So-and-So, are overthrown'.

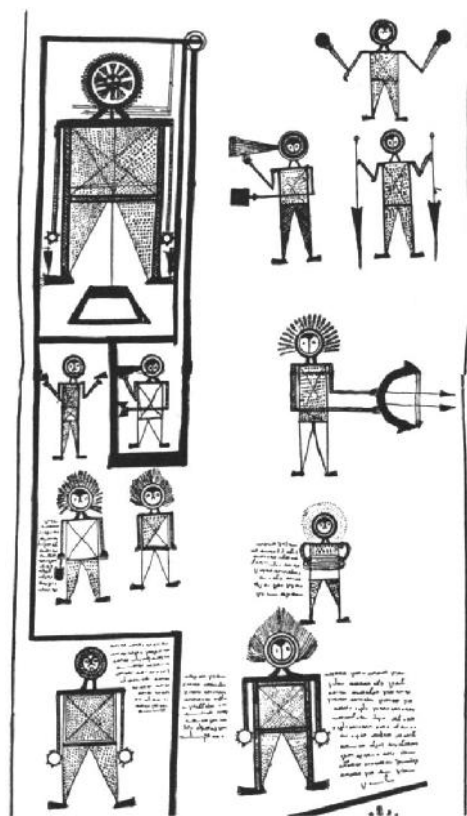
Occasionally enemies are specified by name, and cursed for having spoken against the wearer, or cast the evil eye (*aina bišta*) upon him (or her), or protection is implored against the sorceries of unmarried men and women (for such persons are supposed to seek in the embraces of demons the satisfaction they should have in the arms of loving spouses). Wizards, evil persons, thieves, persecutors, and (unjust?) judges are also enumerated, and the evil spirits bound and overthrown by the exorcisms are legion: divs (*daiwia*), *šadania* (beguiling spirits), *liliths*, false gods (*allahia* and *patihria*), angels (*malaḥia*), fliers (*paharia*), those-who-cast-a-man-down (give him fits), those who give fevers, fluxes, pain-in-the-eye, splitting headaches, wailers, palsies, and so forth.

Occasionally, the more positive aspects of the rolls reveal a poetry and beauty which is astonishing when one remembers the low estate and narrow surroundings of this little race of craftsmen and priests.

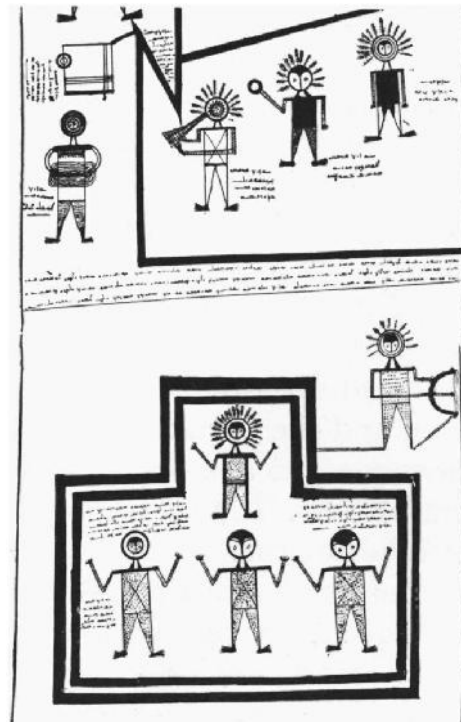
'In the name of the Great Strange Life from the sublime worlds of light which are above all works, healing and purity, speaking and hearing, and lovely faces and radiant countenances and (joyous) assemblies and a Road may there be for Maliha daughter of



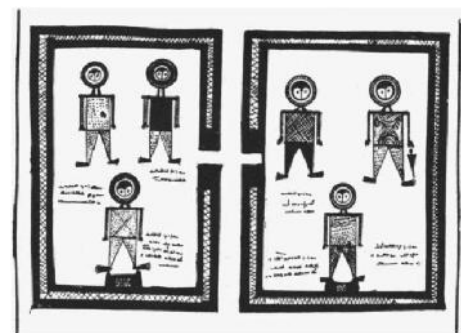
9. Above: the iron gate of Šdum and guardians. Below: spirits of attendants on 'Ur, amongst them Ašur and Guban. The latter 'combs' the souls of evil-doers.



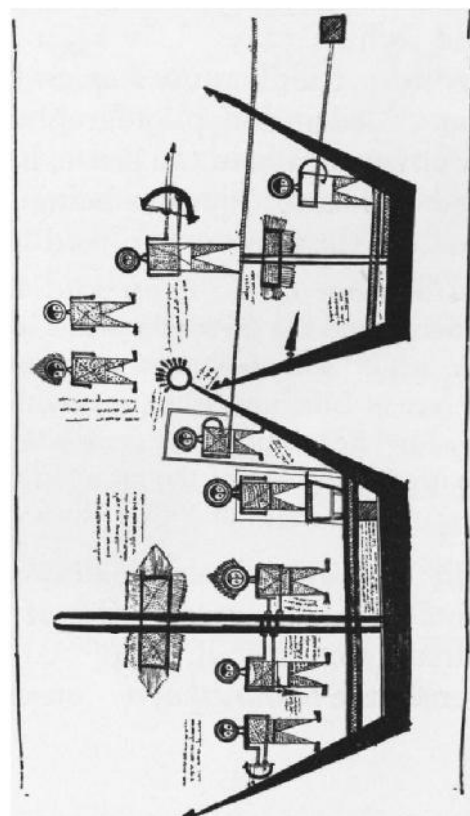
10. Left top figure: 'Ur.



11. The upper of the four enclosed figures is Ruha, mother and consort of 'Ur.



12. Left lowest figure: Harva (Eve). Right lowest figure: Adam.



13. Ship of Šamiš and ship called Gold.

Bricha daughter of Alfia, from the Life and from Manda d Hiia, lords of all healings. With their skies I am clad . . . mist from the clouds covers me, a crown of dangling (?) stars has been brought and set on my head, and a girdle of lightning for my loins. Flying sandals from the Pleiades they brought for my feet . . .'

Magic drawings occur in the rolls, and signs which look as if they had been copied without comprehension from some cuneiform inscription. Cubist drawings of demons, rows of circles (the Aleph and symbol of divine perfection), and sevenfold repetition of the divine names Ya and Yahu are also features, and the occasional ending 'Amin, Sala'.

I now come to another form of Mandaean literature, the Diwans, or large illustrated rolls. I have seen two of these, and am told that there are twenty-four. Whether this is true or not, for it would be typical to give the number twenty-four as being a sun-number regardless of actual fact, I am unable to say. There are Diwans both in the Bibliothèque Nationale at Paris and in the Vatican Library, but I have not seen them, and am only able to deal with those I have seen in Iraq. The priests show them with reluctance, realizing, perhaps, that there is not perfect agreement between these Diwans and the *Ginza*. They are extremely interesting, however, and a full translation of both would throw a great deal of fresh light on origins, beliefs, and language. The Diwans that I saw looked as though they had been copied and re-copied by the less learned priests, spelling and writing were both poor, but the pictures, being the chief feature, were not without skill. I, personally, find their naïve symmetry attractive.

To the first I was only able to give a cursory inspection. It dealt with the 'geography' of the worlds of light and darkness, and I am sorry that I have not yet had the opportunity to study it closely. It may afford clues to the dark questions of the Tura Maddai, the Tar and Tarwan, the 'mountains of light', and other physical features which crop up in Mandaean literature and legend, which may really refer to migration memories. The second was copied for a friend at my request by one of the priests, and before I sent it on I transcribed it and photographed it. The copying was careless, and there were obvious gaps in the sense, but, nevertheless, the pictures were, as usual, copied with care; pictures being of especial magical power. It, too, is a protection for the person who paid for its transcribing, and it begins:

'In the name of the Great Life, healing and purity, sealing and preparedness (or armedness) and the great guardianship of Healthfulness, and a forgiver of sins may there be for me, N. son of N., and my possessions and my tribe, the souls of the sons of the great race of Life, my father, my mother, my brothers and my seed. May my name and their names be united in the great peace. Yawar the Great count them amongst his count and with the number of the father of the 'Uthras, and may I be of the count of Abathur through the strength of Yawar Ziwa and of Simat Hiia.'

There follows a dialogue between Hibil Ziwa and Abathur, the latter being the holder of the great scales of judgement. Sital, the type of the perfectly purified human soul, is placed into one balance, and the soul who has traversed the *maṭaratha*, or houses of purification (watch-houses) in the other.

If the soul of the dead fails to balance with the soul of Šitil, it must return for further purification. Tradition says that Pthahil, the genius concerned with death and lord of the dark spirits which bring disease and death (the *šiviahī*),¹ once was lord of the Scales and that his standard of perfection was so high that the thrones destined for true believers in the realms of light remained empty. Representations were made to the King of Light, and Pthahil was relieved of his office and the Scales placed in the care of Abathur Muzania, Abathur-of-the-Scales. Abathur Rama, the Lofty Abathur, seems to represent another aspect of the same celestial being.

The dialogue concerns the fate of true believers who have sinned—for those of another faith go straight into the fiery mouth of the great Earth Dragon, 'Ur. The sins and sinners enumerated are: 'loosing the girdle and worshipping evil ones' (changing the faith or seeming to), marrying a widow or a non-virgin, perjury, taking a second husband (a woman), not performing ablutions, eating improperly killed animals (i.e. not by Mandaean slaughterers with the proper rite), thieves, those who perform the works of 'Šhaq, son of Yušamin, those who listen to the drum and singing of Ruha (the physical soul, life-breath, mother of 'Ur and the planets), those who baptized without the *pandama* (the white cloth which covers the mouth of the priest during the sacred rites), unworthy priests who write the holy books, those who were lascivious and committed adultery, and so forth. 'In what river shall they be cleansed?'

The answers describe the various punishments meted out to the evil-doers: 'they shall be scorched by fires and yet not die', 'they shall be the portion of Qin' (a she-spirit of the worlds of darkness), they shall go to the purgatory (*matarta*) of the Lion, 'tortured shall be their souls', 'treasures and crowns shall be taken from them; prayer and praise and honour shall be removed from them', 'they shall go to the place of Gaf' (another king of the underworld), and so on.

The pictures which follow are illustrative of the text, and of the powers and dominions of light and darkness. Descriptions elucidate the drawings. For instance, Pthahil, the genius of death, is shown with a curtain canopy behind him and the inscription by the latter, 'This is the curtain of brilliant light drawn over the light-countenance of Pthahil, and Bahram Pthahil Bihram is his name'. The curtain is further described: 'This is the veil, and sixty veils are they'. His throne is labelled: 'This is his throne', and Pthahil himself is labelled: 'This is the likeness of Pthahil the Great who was begotten of Hibil Ziwa from Zahra'il'.²

The next important portrait is that of Abathur, who 'weighs the soul which obeys its lusts'. 'Abathur is his name, Kafril is his name, Bhaq is his name, Hazaban is his name, Nunab is his name, Taur'il is his name, Seven-Secret-Names is his name.' He wears a pear-shaped amulet (this shape is common

¹ They also play the role of fairies and goblins.

² Pthahil is said to be the result of the union of light and darkness. Zahra'il (who must be Venus-Ištar) was given to Hibil Ziwa in marriage when

she went into the underworld to bring Ruha into the upper world. She is the protectress and guardian of women in childbirth.

for amulet plaques to-day), and on it is written, 'This is Abathur: just measurement of numbers is the office of Abathur'. The portal behind him is labelled, 'This is the Gate of Mysteries: White-hot Crystal, Qasa'il is its name' (are its names); 'It uplifts the soul which ponders on it'.

Other figures of light are portrayed, some in priest-like garb with *margnas*, or ritual staves, the sacramental apparatus of brazier, *peytha*, bottle for the sacramental water, and so on. There is no space here to describe all of them, but they include Bihram, or Bahram, the genius of Baptism, Hibil Ziwa, Šitil, Annuš, and lastly Simat Hiia, together with two other female spirits of light.

The next register apparently represents the world of Pthahil—'its name is Bihram Arqa'. As one would expect in the world of this Mandaean Ptah, a large ferry-boat to take the souls of the dead from Tibil (this world) into the next figures in the illustrations.

The next register contains the Tree, presumably the Tree of Life. Mandaeans think that this is the heavenly tree which suckles children who have died in infancy, and children are seen reaching their hands towards its fruit. The tree resembles a fir, but in such drawings much cannot be attached to such a resemblance. It is probably the Sindarka usually spoken of in connexion with a spring (*Ain u Sindarka*), and the tradition is that the *Sindarka* is the date-palm. The top of the tree has a sickle shape.¹

I must curtail my description, and pass over the text which follows to the next register, which is divided into three sections. It is devoted to the *mataratha*, watch-houses or purgatories, and amongst those described and depicted are those of Kiwan (Saturn), Nirigh (Mars), Nbo (Mercury), Bil (Bel), Libat (Venus), Sin (the Moon), and Šamiš (the Sun). These seven planetary purgatories are succeeded by the purgatories of Pthahil, Habšaba (the personified Sunday), and of the seven sons of Pthahil. The second category of nine *mataratha* appear to be especially for sinful priests. Descriptions of the various *mataratha* are given, also their extent and distance one from the other. For instance, in the *matarta* of Nirigh are found men who were quarrelsome with their wives, fond of strife, and 'fought on Sunday'.

The chained beasts in the centre panel are called the *Zangoyi* (bellowers, barkers) by the Mandaeans, who say they represent the dogs who torment the unworthy through the worlds of purification. They are labelled lions, dogs, and wolves.

A picture of an instrument of torture and representations of various demons follow, and curious is the 'well of black waters' for those who made themselves unclean by contact with women in a state of uncleanness, also the demon with a triangular face who sits in the threshold of a door which is guarded by a chained lion. Some have instruments of music, one a comb, others darts. The largest figure amongst them is 'Ur, here given semi-human shape. Worthy of notice is the representation of a temple enclosed by a double *mišra* (dividing line) and guarded by an archer with vegetation hair. It con-

¹ *Darka* is Persian, and means 'tree'. Can Sin have originally had the meaning of dedication to Sin, the moon? It is not improbable, though there is no such meaning surviving in present beliefs.

tains four figures, the single one at the top having vegetation hair. The figure on the extreme left in the 'temple' has a gloss describing her as 'Ruha Qdaša' (the Sacred Breath, holy spirit). Vegetation hair seems to be a characteristic of spirits with the termination *-iil*, or of those connected with water. The only exception seems to be Tarfan Daiwa, who beats cymbals, but his name which means 'Clapper' also refers to clapping of leaves and shaking of foliage, so that the hair is explained. Vegetation hair recurs in a lower register which deals with the planetary boats, of which only three are reproduced in the imperfect Diwan sent me. No doubt in some original all the seven figured.

The first boat is the ship of Šamiš (the sun-god). In the centre is a mast called the *drabša*, standard or banner, which is represented as radiating light, and described: 'This banner is the Great Perfection: it sheds three hundred and sixty glories of light. It is of the brightness of the mighty Life . . . and Drabš Tibil is its name.'

The standard is held on the right by a figure with vegetation hair, 'This is the likeness of Šamiš, Adona (Lord) is his name'. To the left of the mast stands a figure wearing a dagger, to the left of whom is an archer. The former is labelled Sam Ziwa, but tradition associates him with the King of Darkness, and says that he represents the harmful aspects of the sun, scorching, withering, and so on. The archer is described above, 'This is Sfar: he is from the heights', and below, 'This one's name is Mqašta Raqail ("A Bow-he-Spanned" *-iil*), his name is Šfan Štail ("My-lips-are-imbibing" *-iil*)'. He may represent the rainbow. Water and light are closely associated in Mandaean thought.

Between Šamiš and the stern are two figures, both enclosed by protective divisions (*mišria*),¹ and the smaller wields an enormous paddle which stretched out over the next boat and ends over the prow of the moon-boat, where there is an inscription, 'This is the steering-paddle of Šamiš: it is sixty yana' (? yana is a spring or well of water), 'it is light, strength and stability'.² On the sun-ship itself is written, 'This is the likeness of Šamiš, who is called by seven names. His name is Rhail (Watcher *-iil*), his name is Bihram, his name is Adona (Lord), his name is Šamiš . . .' (doubtful words) . . . 'within his Sign came the seven secret names of the Life'. The stern ends in a circle from which vegetation sprouts.

A small ship, labelled 'This ship's name is Gold', follows that of Šamiš. It too has a *drabša* (standard) radiating light, and just above this stands an archer with the description 'This is the likeness of one called Samandar'iil (Vine-Blossom *-iil*), he holds in his hand two arrows'. This ship contains a single figure to wield the paddle. But between the two ships, apparently in the sky, stand two figures, one of which has the gloss, 'This is the likeness of Libat, "Sitting-on-the-Mountain-of-Šamiš" is her name; seven names has she'. This recalls the ancient representations of an Ištar figure by the twin

¹ A *mišra* in actual cult is a shallow trench traced outside a sacred or magic area, to cut it off from defilement and shut out evil spirits.

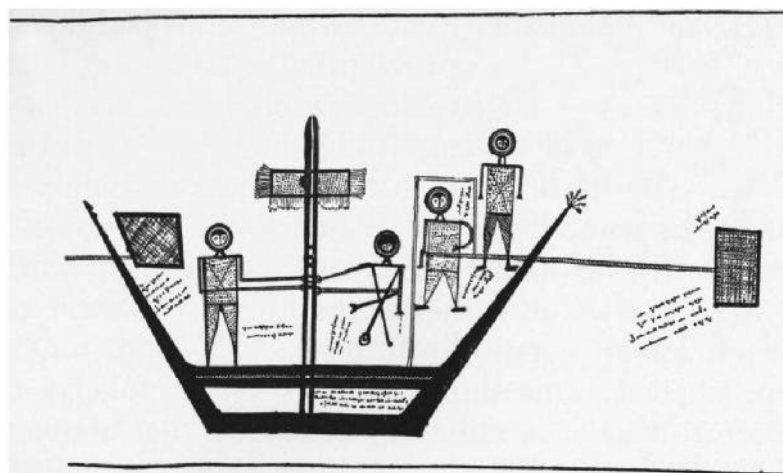
² *Šrara* has the meaning of stability of health, soundness.

mountains of the rising sun-god. This little ship has a dagger placed in the prow, beneath which is written, 'This is the knife (*skan*, which may also mean rudder); its name is Šumuaiil, it is health and stability'.

The third ship is the moon-ship, and contains five figures. That grasping the *drabša* on the right is oddly misshapen, for Sin (the Moon) is supposed to bring about deformities, abortions, and imperfections. Nevertheless, he is given the divine appellation 'Bahram': 'This is the likeness of Sin. Bahram is his name.' Descriptions below him and on the ship follow, 'This is the ship of Sin, *Pariatha* is its name', 'This is the ship of Sin. Bihrām is his name, Aṭraīl (Assailer -īl) is his name, Šuraīl (?) is his name, Seven names, Seven Mysteries.' The figure on the left seems to have no description, for that to its right refers to the ship. The figure holding the paddle is in a *mišra*: 'This is Giu grasping the steering-paddle', while the figure beside it has, 'This is the likeness of Brahim (Bahram?) grasping the steering-oar'. The stern of the moon-boat also has vegetation sprouting from it, though less than that of the sun-boat. The paddle has descriptions, 'This is the steering-paddle of Sin: of the world (of light?) it is, stability and strength and great . . . it is'.

I have dwelt at length on this curious document because it throws a sidelight on many doubtful matters. It is obviously imperfect and much re-copied, for Mandaeans look upon it as a great mystery and full of magic power.

In my next article I hope to deal with some more of the less known, or unknown, writings of the Mandaeans.



14. The ship of the Moon-god (Sin), whose curious mutilated figure grasps the mast on the right.